



Information Note

DEVELOPING COUNTRY JOURNALISTS HONOURED BY UNITED NATIONS FOR THE BEST OZONE AND CLIMATE REPORTING

EARTH DAY ANNOUNCEMENT

PARIS, 22 April 2010, Earth Day -- As the curtain is now fully raised on the world stage in which ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons are no longer produced, three journalists have received top honours from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for their reporting on ozone depletion and climate issues.

While the phase-out of these ozone-destroying chemicals is a global success story that is unfolding under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, some significant challenges remain – not the least of which is the forthcoming phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). Although less harmful to the ozone layer than the CFCs which they replaced, many of these chemicals are also very potent greenhouse gases.

The links and interconnections between the two environmental challenges of climate change and ozone depletion have been explored and exposed to the public by the winning journalists in the first competition of its kind organised by the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, in cooperation with UNEP Division of Communication and Public Information (DCPI) and UNEP's Regional Offices.

The competition encouraged journalists from developing countries to submit recently published articles that represent the best reporting on interlinkages between ozone and climate change issues. UNEP's Regional OzonAction teams organized jury panels consisting of experts from the print media, environmental fields, education professionals and professors of university journalism courses. The selection criteria for the winning articles included the interest of the topics covered, the quality and depth of the writing, and the clarity in conveying the ozone and climate story to the general public.

The results are:

Winners:

- Mr. Essa Alkhroussi "*Ozone is Recovering in the Sultanate*" (Oman Daily, Oman)
- Mr. Alejandro Balaguer, "*Ozono a Salvo*" (La Prensa de Panamá – Section Vivir+, Panama)

- Mr. Umesh Kumar Raghuwanshi, *No Option: Switch to CFC –free ACs* (Hindustan Times, India)

Honourable mention:

- Mr. Nirmal Ghosh, *Two Treaties, with a Planet at Stake* (Singapore Strait Times, Singapore)
- Ms. Farah Ateat, *Restore the Ozone Layer to Recover - a Difficult Task but not Impossible* (Alghad ALardni, Jordan)
- Ms. Priscilla Priyanka Govind, *Fiji's Response to Ozone Depletion* (Free lance journalist, Fiji)

The winners are offered a travelling fellowship to neighbouring countries to facilitate the research and preparation of a follow-up story on the subject related to ozone layer protection and its linkage with climate change.

Public understanding of the differences and interlinkages between ozone and climate change needs to be increased, and this competition and its prizes are intended to do just that. The media plays a vital role in communicating to the general public what needs to be done by different societal groups to make a dramatic shift towards a low carbon society and adapt to the effects of climate change.

For more information please see the web site :

<http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/ozone2climate/index.htm>

Notes to Editors:

About the Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol focuses on the protection of the earth's ozone layer. This treaty has enabled both developed and developing countries to achieve a near total phase-out in the production and use of most ozone depleting substances. Because the majority of ozone depleting substances are also potent global warming gasses, the actions taken under the Montreal Protocol have contributed significantly to the global effort to address climate change.

Interesting facts about the Montreal Protocol

- The Montreal Protocol has achieved universal participation by all states in the world, the number of participating States is 196, an achievement unprecedented by any treaty;
- It is estimated that without the Protocol, by the year 2050 ozone depletion would have risen to at least 50% in the northern hemisphere's mid latitudes and 70% in the southern mid latitudes, about 10 times worse than current levels;
- The Montreal Protocol is estimated to have prevented: 19 million more cases of non-melanoma cancer, 1.5 million more cases of melanoma cancer, 130 million more cases of eye cataracts,
- Ninety seven per cent of all ozone depleting substances controlled by the global treaty known as the Montreal Protocol have been phased out - but what remains is still a challenge to eliminate;

- Global observations have verified that atmospheric levels of key ozone depleting substances are going down and it is believed that with implementation of the Protocol's provisions the ozone layer should return to pre-1980 levels by 2050 to 2075;
- In 2003, political recognition of the Protocol came in the statement of then United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, who termed the Montreal Protocol as "perhaps the single most successful international environmental agreement to date".

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